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Chairperson: Mr. Chipaziwa ..... (Zimbabwe)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Statement by the President of the General Assembly

1. **Mr. Deiss** (President of the General Assembly) said that his decision to visit the Fourth Committee was part of a plan to visit all the Main Committees to express his appreciation for their significant contribution to the work of the General Assembly; indeed the work of the Committees alleviated the workload of the plenary, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of the Assembly.

2. He was pleased with the progress the Committee had made in its work, which encompassed diverse and complex issues. Though much remained to be done, he was confident that the Committee would conclude its work on time, before the end-of-year vacation period.

3. He noted that widespread consensus had been reached on the need for cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, for example, and welcomed the renewed commitment to peacekeeping, an issue vital to the Organization. Much of the Committee's work in that area related to the strategic issue of the communication work of the United Nations on such key matters as the Millennium Development Goals, peace and security and human rights.

4. Turning to the complex issue relating to the situation in the Middle East, which was on the Committee's agenda for that meeting, he said that it would demand further dedication, flexibility and cooperation; the Committee's work on that difficult topic was very important to the overall process.

5. He hoped that Member States would continue to work together in a constructive and positive spirit towards an outcome that would support the ongoing efforts to foster a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Agenda item 52: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (A/65/326, A/65/327, A/65/355, A/65/365, A/65/366, A/65/372 and A/65/520)

6. **Mr. Kohona** (Sri Lanka), speaking as Chairman of the Special Committee, introduced its report (A/65/327). Israel's denial of access to the occupied territories had once again compelled the Special Committee to examine the human rights situation in those territories by relying on a wide variety of written sources and contacts and travelling to neighbouring countries to obtain first-hand information from witnesses, including Palestinians, Israelis and Syrians.

7. The Special Committee had found a failure on the part of the Government of Israel to address the long-standing pattern of serious human rights violations, and to protect the population of the occupied territories and meet its obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law. The policies and practices emanating from the occupation were a key source of the violations, which particularly affected women and children. The current regime infringed on a broad range of rights, including the rights to education, health and an adequate standard of living. Consequently, a sizeable proportion of the occupied population lived in poverty, with large numbers totally dependent on humanitarian assistance.

8. One issue of the utmost concern was the Palestinian right to self-determination, which was undermined by the ongoing confiscation of land, settlement expansion — in October 2010, media reports suggested that new homes were being built more than four times faster than in the previous two years — the construction of the separation wall and efforts to remove traces of Palestinian heritage.

9. Policies on settlement expansion, settler violence, home demolitions and forced evictions, the separation wall and the revocation of residency rights had caused significant forced displacement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In than regard, the Special Committee was particularly concerned that Israeli military orders issued in April 2010 might lead to the transfer or deportation of many Palestinians living in the West Bank and East Jerusalem to the Gaza Strip or elsewhere at any moment.

10. Referring to the Gaza Strip, he expressed concern over the four-year blockade, a policy tantamount to collective punishment, that continued to violate the economic and social rights of Gaza's residents. Despite Israel's decision to ease the blockade, goods entering Gaza fell well below the needs of the population while the almost total ban on exports and restriction on the movement of people remained in place. Travel permits had been delayed or rejected, resulting in the death of Palestinians who needed medical treatment in Israel. The loss of life in conflict-related violence, especially in the so-called buffer zone, was also of concern. In

order to prevent the recurrence of such violations, the Special Committee believed that it was critical to address the issue of accountability. He cited in that regard Israel's investigations of the military offensive in Gaza in December 2008 and January 2009, which had failed to meet required standards and Israel's failure to stop attacks by settlers on Palestinian civilians and their property or to prosecute those responsible.

11. In the occupied Syrian Golan, violations outlined in the report had to do with illegal settlements, the inequitable distribution of water resources, access to essential services and limited local employment opportunities. Landmines continued to pose a major threat to safety and to limit the movement of people and the use of land.

12. He drew attention to the Special Committee's recommendations and expressed the hope that they would be implemented by all the parties concerned in order to enable the Palestinian people and other Arabs in the occupied territories to exercise the rights of which they had been deprived for so long.

13. **Ms. Rasheed** (Observer for Palestine) said that her delegation was once again obliged to come before the Committee to discuss how Israel continued to deny the basic human rights of the Palestinian people, making peace, hope and prosperity as elusive as ever. Behind a façade of actively pursuing peace, the occupying Power was doing everything possible to undermine any future prospects for a peaceful settlement.

14. In the Occupied Gaza Strip the civilian population was reeling from the collective punishment of an unlawful blockade. Even the supposed easing of the restrictions on the entry of essential goods admitted barely 25 per cent of what was needed, especially for reconstruction, and all exports were prohibited. The almost total ban on the movement of people was interfering with normal social patterns and the requirements of health and education. Gaza was essentially in a state of siege. The international community had to compel Israel to open Gaza's border crossings for the regular, sustained movement of persons and goods; and to demand accountability for the documented war crimes committed by Israel during its military aggression against Gaza in 2008, and for its recent illegal interception of relief flotillas to Gaza.

15. The situation in the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem was also grave. Of particular concern was Israel's continuing colonization campaign throughout the Occupied Territory that was in grave breach of international law and agreed commitment, and went against the global consensus that settlements constituted a major obstacle to peace and the two-State solution. Israel's recently halted moratorium on settlement construction had actually never been fully in effect and had never included East Jerusalem. With illegal settlements had come illegal settlers — 8,000 of them since January 2010 alone — who regularly terrorized or harassed Palestinians with Israel's encouragement; the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had documented 168 attacks by Israeli settlers. Israel was taking steps to ensure a Jewish majority in and around East Jerusalem by using various stratagems to quietly displace the indigenous Palestinian inhabitants, the goal being to alter Jerusalem's demographic composition, legal status and distinctly Palestinian Arab character, and to sever it from the rest of the Palestinian territory.

16. At the same time, Israel's expansionist wall, constructed mostly on Palestinian lands, continued to be built, and followed a route that set the stage for a de facto annexation of all Palestinian territory between the wall and the Green Line, incorporating the most important illegal settlements and key aquifers. Tens of thousands of Palestinians now lived in walled-in enclaves, separated from the rest of the West Bank and from their farmlands, schools, workplaces and medical centres.

17. Along with bypass roads, checkpoints and other Israeli military installations, all those measures were making the establishment of a contiguous, viable and independent Palestinian State more difficult to achieve physically.

18. It was also important to mention the plight of thousands of Palestinian civilians, including hundreds of women and children, who continued to be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned by Israel under conditions in which torture and abuse occurred.

19. Despite the bitter, brutal realities, the Palestinian people and their leadership remained committed to the goal of peace. The Palestinian side was upholding its commitments, promoting security and the rule of law and reforming and strengthening its national institutions. The people themselves were working hard

to heal and develop their society as they strove for fulfilment of their legitimate national aspirations. Israel's actions, on the other hand, called into question its legitimacy as a partner for peace. Only a complete cessation of all settlement activities and human rights violations would create an environment conducive to the peace process and its ultimate goal of two States, Palestine and Israel, living side-by-side in peace and security on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with the Palestinian people living as a free, secure, self-reliant nation in an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

20. She expressed Palestine's appreciation to the Special Committee for raising awareness of the critical human rights situation of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation, to all United Nations committees and agencies providing vital assistance to the Palestinian people, and to all Member States that supported them.

21. **Ms. Deman** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the relaunching of direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian side in Washington in September 2010 had raised high expectations. The European Union urged the parties to work fast and hard on all the final status issues in order to meet the Quartet's call for negotiated settlement within one year. Both parties needed to promote an environment conducive to progress by refraining from provocative actions and inflammatory rhetoric and by honouring commitments made.

22. Israeli settlements, the separation wall where it was built on occupied land, home demolitions and evictions were all illegal under international law and jeopardized the two-State solution. Israel should immediately end all settlement activities, in East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank, including natural growth, and dismantle all outposts erected since 2001.

23. The European Union also called for a complete stop to all violence, including rocket fire and attacks against civilians. The abducted Israeli soldier should be released without delay.

24. Its member States welcomed Israel's recent easing of restrictions on movement in the West Bank and on entry of goods into Gaza and urged it to take other similar steps to improve living conditions and promote Palestinian economic development. Israel and all other parties had the obligation to respect the human rights of the Palestinian population in the Occupied Territories. They welcomed the progress achieved thus far under the Palestinian Authority's reform and institutional development plan for the future Palestinian State.

25. With regard to Gaza in particular, the European Union called for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), the full observance of international humanitarian law and of prior agreements on the unconditional opening of border crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza, including goods from the West Bank. A fundamental change of policy was needed that would allow for the reconstruction and economic recovery of Gaza. At the same time, Israel's legitimate security concerns must be addressed.

26. The European Union would continue to work with its partners within the Quartet and with others to help advance a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict that fully respected international humanitarian and human rights law.

27. **Mr. Kleib** (Indonesia) expressed concern that Israel continued to ignore the Special Committee's request for full access to the Occupied Territories. It was nonetheless obvious from the Committee's excellent report that humanitarian, political and economic conditions had continued to worsen for Palestinians. Israel held to its long-standing pattern of systematic violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. Its efforts to transfer the population from strategic areas of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, through forced evictions, demolitions, the separation wall and revocation of residency rights, in order to advance its own interests, were deplorable. Israel was refusing to offer any protection to civilians or even recognize any of their rights under the law.

28. The blockade of Gaza and the restrictions on movement resulting from the construction of the separation wall in the West Bank were forms of collective punishment. Israel's closure policy and its separation of the West Bank from Gaza were the occasion for reprehensible human rights violations.

Meanwhile, in the occupied Syrian Golan, Israel was damaging the environment and the means of livelihood of Syrian citizens, and had begun diverting water from the Territory, with serious consequences for economic activities in the area.

29. Direct talks had started between Palestinians and Israelis only two months earlier, but they were dogged by Israel's handling of core Palestinian issues. The settlement question remained the most formidable hurdle. Israel was ignoring calls to stop all settlement construction, and its odious settlement policy, aimed at altering the demographic composition, physical character and status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, could not be disregarded.

30. His delegation strongly supported all the recommendations made by the Special Committee in section VII of its report, especially the first two recommendations addressed to the General Assembly, and the first three recommendations addressed to the Government of Israel. It was urgent for Israel to build mutual confidence with the Palestinians by adopting realistic, pro-peace policies. At the same time, it must withdraw its forces from all the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan, and permit Palestinian refugees to return to their land. Respect for international law and international humanitarian law by Israel was the only avenue to peace in the Middle East.

31. **Ms. Hernández Toledano** (Cuba) said that the international community continued to be alarmed at the escalation of violence and attacks in the occupied Arab territories. Poverty rates had soared, especially in the Gaza Strip, where the majority of the population was dependent on food aid for survival and a sizeable proportion was unemployed.

32. As a result of Operation Cast Lead, nearly half of the schools in Gaza were damaged or destroyed. Since more than half of the population of Gaza was under 18 years of age, the interruption of their schooling was having a devastating effect. Indeed, 40,000 Palestinian children were unable to start school during the current academic year because Israel had not allowed construction materials into Gaza.

33. The international community's efforts had come to naught, while the Israeli authorities, with flagrant disdain for international law and blatant disrespect for the resolutions of the United Nations, pursued their policy of aggression. The usual double standards and the threat by one permanent member to veto any draft resolution aimed at a just and impartial solution to that protracted conflict had shackled Security Council attempts seriously to address the issue.

34. Cuba condemned the Israeli occupation of Palestinian Territory and was appalled at the continuing impunity enjoyed by Israel. As illustrated in the reports of the Secretary-General, the Israeli Government's lack of commitment and cooperation was manifest in its refusal to provide the information required by the General Assembly to fulfil the Committee's mandate.

35. Her delegation was alarmed at the continuing deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, owing to Israel's excessive and indiscriminate use of force against Palestinian civilians as well as other illegal policies and practices, including the collective punishment of Palestinians, especially the genocidal blockade of Gaza. Ever since the criminal attack by Israeli special forces, in international waters, on a Gaza-bound humanitarian flotilla, Cuba had been calling on the international community to demand that the Israeli authorities immediately lift the blockade.

36. Israel was waging an unequal war with the most modern weaponry against a civilian population, defending its inalienable right to exist as an independent State, which constituted a massive violation of Palestinians' human rights, including the right to life. The continuation of the policy of closures, and the expansion of Israeli settlement construction through the seizure of vast tracts of land, raised doubts as to whether it was serious about peace negotiations. The continued construction of the separation wall, which cut off more than half the population of the West Bank, and in fact annexed it, was in blatant disregard of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and of General Assembly resolution ES-10/15.

37. Her delegation reaffirmed its belief in the invalidity and illegality of all the occupying Power's actions to alter the legal, physical and demographic character of the occupied Syrian Golan and impose its jurisdiction and administration there. Such actions flouted international law, international agreements and the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations.

38. The Palestinian people had the inalienable right to establish an independent, sovereign State with East Jerusalem as its capital. She therefore called for Israel's unconditional return of the Arab territories

occupied in June 1967, which was the only road towards a just and lasting peace for all the peoples of the region.

39. **Mr. Mbaye** (Senegal) said that the massive denial of essential human rights of Palestinian people and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories resulting from the long Israeli occupation was causing intolerable suffering in the region and creating tensions and confrontations dangerous to international peace and security. It was urgent to restore full enjoyment of human rights to the people of the Territories, so that they could live in freedom and dignity.

40. The international community must do its utmost to end the occupation, itself a violation of international law. At the same time, Senegal invited Israel, a country with which it had amicable relations, to respect and apply in the Occupied Territories the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1949 Geneva Conventions: everything in the history of the people of Israel should dispose it to respond to Senegal's appeal and at last move in the long-awaited direction.

41. Even without Israel's cooperation in preparing its mandated report, the Special Committee had managed to collect enough pertinent information. The report described numerous systematic violations of human rights and humanitarian law, especially as regarded freedom of movement, employment, health, education, freedom of expression, security and the right to life. Of greatest concern was the refusal to allow the Palestinian people to exercise the inalienable right to self-determination, which included the right to establish a sovereign, independent, democratic and contiguous State. Israel's occupation policies and practices and the culture of impunity surrounding them seriously compromised the establishment of decent and dignified living conditions for the people of the Territories under occupation, both Palestinian and Syrian. Senegal's hope that Israel would combat impunity as a key to safeguarding the rule of law in no way contradicted its desire for the advancement of a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict. His country stood with the parties to the conflict as they sought for a just, definitive and comprehensive solution, so ardently desired by the Palestinian and Arab peoples in the Territories under Israeli occupation.

42. **Mr. Ja`afari** (Syrian Arab Republic), thanking the Special Committee for its valuable work and consistently professional, impartial and informative reports, said that Israel continued to disregard over 1,000 resolutions calling for its withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and for the establishment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. It consistently exploited the existing culture of impunity, operating under the direct protection of parties that claimed to uphold international law in order to pursue its expansionist ambitions at the expense of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories. Since the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices played a key role in bringing that situation to the attention of the international community, it must be allowed to continue its work until all the occupied Arab territories had been returned in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. In that connection, the General Assembly and the Security Council should develop new forms of joint cooperation with the aim of compelling Israel to receive the Special Committee and allow it to visit the occupied Arab territories in pursuance of its mandate.

43. The report of the Special Committee (A/65/327) drew attention to a consistent pattern of human rights violations committed by Israel in disregard of its obligations under international law. The range of illegal Israeli practices carried out in the occupied Syrian Golan included, among others, the building and expansion of settlements, the forced separation of families, and attempts to impose Israeli citizenship on the Syrian population and to alter the demographic situation on the ground. In addition, the Israeli Knesset had before it legislation which, if passed, would further complicate all future efforts to secure the return of any part of the Syrian Golan or East Jerusalem. That legislation was incompatible with international law norms, and the international community should bring pressure to bear on Israel in that regard, requiring it to comply with the Security Council resolutions calling for its withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan, including Security Council resolution 497 (1981).

44. The Jewish Agency for Israel, successive Israeli Governments and a number of organizations, some of them active in the United States of America, had set out to expand the settlements in the occupied Golan, heedless of the rights of the Syrian population. At the same time, members of the Israeli Government had affirmed that the occupied Golan would remain under

Israeli control forever and had expressed their rejection of the principle of land for peace.

45. Syrian workers and landowners in the occupied Golan faced discrimination, were denied employment, were forced to pay exorbitant taxes on their agricultural produce and were prevented from gaining equal and equitable access to water resources in the Golan. Indeed, the Israeli occupation forces had diverted water from Mas'adah Lake in the Golan to settlers' farms, inflicting losses of some $20 million on the Syrian population. Israel furthermore pursued a policy of imprisoning Syrian civilians in the Golan and subjecting them to grave human rights violations. It persistently refused to identify the locations of the 2 million mines which it had laid in the Golan, even though more than 600 persons, 217 of them children, had been killed by them to date. Moreover, it had buried nuclear waste in the Golan, disregarding the risks to the health and safety of the Syrian population. Israel pursued policies aimed at severing all links between the Syrian population and their homeland, making it difficult, for example, for students from the occupied Golan who had completed their studies in the Syrian Arab Republic to return to their homes.

46. Israel subjected the Palestinian people to a range of repressive policies, including killings, starvation, collective punishment, confiscation of land, forced displacement and many other human rights violations, and it had turned the Gaza Strip into the world's largest prison.

47. It was therefore important to recall that laws, including international laws, must apply to all; otherwise, the world would regress to the situation that obtained in the Middle Ages. The credibility of the United Nations was at stake, and the Organization must bear its responsibilities and hold Israel to account for the war crimes which it had committed.

48. He expressed support for the recommendations of the Special Committee calling for the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981) and reiterated his Government's commitment to a just and comprehensive peace which would ensure the full restoration of Arab rights, Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories to the line of June 1967, the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital and the settlement of the Palestine refugees issue in accordance with the relevant resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the Arab peace initiative. The occupied Syrian Golan was not up for negotiation; it must be restored to the Syrian homeland, if there was to be any chance for peace.

49. **Mr. Laher** (South Africa) said that, in spite of the stated will of the United Nations in resolution 2443 (XXVIII) and subsequent resolutions, and its repeated condemnation of the massive and systematic human rights violations perpetrated in the Occupied Territories, Israel had continued its aggressive acts. The bleak portrait painted in the most recent report of the Special Committee suggested that the situation had in fact got worse. In that regard, he called on Israel to cooperate with the Special Committee by granting full access to the Occupied Territories in pursuance of its mandate.

50. Despite Israel's November 2009 partial moratorium on settlement activities, the ongoing confiscation of land, settlement expansion and the construction of the wall undermined the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and demonstrated Israel's utter disdain for international law. Indeed, Israel's failure to renew the settlement moratorium, following the resumption of direct negotiations in September 2010, appeared to signal its lack of real intent to reach a negotiated settlement to the question of Palestine. He called once again on Israel to cease the confiscation of land and expansion of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

51. Israel's continued violation of a range of the Palestinian peoples' rights, including the rights to health, education, an adequate standard of living, work and family life was also a cause for concern. The situation had been further exacerbated by the restrictions on movement through checkpoints and roadblocks. Israel's decision in June 2010 to ease the blockade of Gaza by allowing unrestricted entry for all items except a published list of military and so-called dual use items had not improved matters as construction materials, which were mainly classified as "dual use", were critical to the reconstruction of Gaza. The blockade adversely affected the economic life of Palestinians as their export activities were seriously curtailed, and directly contributed to increases in unemployment and poverty.

52. Fully cognizant of the plight of the Palestinian people, especially those living in Gaza, South Africa condemned the indiscriminate firing of rockets from

Gaza into southern Israel, which constituted a violation of international humanitarian law.

53. In light of the severe human rights situation in Palestine and the occupied territories, South Africa called on the United Nations to ensure the implementation of all relevant international legal instruments, including relevant United Nations resolutions and conventions ratified by Israel.

54. He reiterated his delegation's call for the creation of a Palestinian State to coexist peacefully alongside Israel on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, believing that to be the only sustainable solution to the conflict. South Africa supported the draft resolutions submitted under the current agenda item.

55. **Mr. A. M. Khan** (Pakistan) said that settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was a major provocation, violating international law, tainting the atmosphere for negotiations and muting the voices of peace and compassion. The most disquieting aspect was the ongoing efforts to remove traces of Palestinian heritage, endemic in East Jerusalem, Hebron and Bethlehem. In addition, violence by Israeli settlers against their Palestinian neighbours was a corollary of settlement activity. He therefore called upon Israel to meet its international obligations by completely ceasing all settlement activity.

56. Another area of concern was the obstruction of freedom of movement and the restrictions on the flow of commerce, which had led to unemployment and strangled the local economy, particularly in Gaza. Similarly, the illegal separation wall gave permanence to the blockade policy and restricted the access of Palestinian families to farms, water resources, health care and education.

57. The deteriorating living conditions in the occupied Syrian Golan, caused by the inequitable distribution of water resources, discrimination against workers and high rates of taxes, were in direct contravention of Security Council resolution 497 (1981).

58. The Palestinian peoples' right to self-determination was a fundamental human right and its denial was at the root of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Human rights violations in the occupied territories were perpetuated by a culture of impunity that must be ended in order to build an environment of trust and confidence, without which no meaningful negotiations could be sustained. In that regard, Pakistan supported the implementation of the recommendations made by the Special Committee.

59. For there to be lasting peace in the region, parallel progress must also be made on Israel's conflicts with the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon. Israel must withdraw completely from Lebanese territory and the Syrian Golan, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. Pakistan remained committed not only to the struggle of the Palestinian people to achieve its right to self-determination but also to peace for all inhabitants of the region.

60. **Ms. Vivas Mendoza** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that in recent months other forces had bolstered the Israeli Government's campaign to derail the Middle East peace process while the majority of frustrated United Nations Members stood impotently by as double standards were used in international law. The Special Committee had found that there was a long-standing pattern of violations of human rights by the State of Israel, in a climate of impunity. Such actions prevented the Palestinian people from exercising their right to self-determination, hindered the search for peace in the region, threatened international peace and security and violated the principle of sovereign equality of States.

61. The Palestinian people had a right to establish a sovereign, democratic and viable State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

62. Her delegation was dismayed at the ongoing blockade of Gaza, which had created a humanitarian crisis. It was also concerned at the deliberate fragmentation of Palestinian territory and destruction of economic activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which led to the disintegration of Palestinian society; attempts to alter the Territory's demographic make-up were also of serious concern. Settlement construction and land expropriation were continuing and, in the West Bank, restrictions on movement were affecting daily life and tearing families apart. People whose only crime was their attachment to their homeland were being forced to live in fear.

63. The construction of the wall showed disregard for the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and the Fourth Geneva Convention. Israel's ongoing efforts to change the names of streets and holy

places from Arabic to Hebrew were designed to obliterate the historical memory and identity of the Palestinian people. The increase in violent attacks by Israeli settlers on Palestinians and their property was not unrelated to the Government's aggressive campaign. Settlement expansion and human rights violations were also continuing in the occupied Syrian Golan.

64. Her Government supported the Special Committee's work and fully endorsed its recommendations, including the one that urged Member States of the United Nations to intensify diplomatic efforts to enforce Israel's compliance with relevant United Nations resolutions and with international humanitarian and human rights law. Venezuela awaited the outcome of the investigation into the attack by Israeli forces on the humanitarian flotilla.

65. **Mr. Alhajraf** (Kuwait) said that the Special Committee's report provided a clear and candid account of the continuation by Israel of practices that contravened international humanitarian law and the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Those practices had caused a sharp deterioration in the human rights situation in the occupied Arab territories and had increased the suffering of the Palestinians and others. Kuwait called on the international community, particularly the Security Council, to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, which constituted the gravest threat to security and peace in the Middle East. In that regard, his Government welcomed the United States efforts in support of direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine and called on Israel to end all its settlement activities and attempts to block direct negotiations. It furthermore condemned the illegal blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip and the attack carried out on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla in international waters in May 2010.

66. It was regrettable that the Palestinian people continued to be subjected to human rights violations and occupation and that the Israeli Government persisted in its excessive use of military force, deliberate and widescale destruction of Palestinian homes and institutions, imposition of restrictions on civilians' freedom of movement and unjustifiable and illegal construction of settlements. Coupled with a policy of siege and collective punishment, those practices cast doubt on the prospects for resumed negotiations. Moreover, the continued erection of the illegal separation wall and Israel's many violations of international law and agreements constituted an obstacle to peace and development.

67. Accordingly, Kuwait reiterated its full and steadfast support for the struggle of the Palestinian people to regain their legitimate rights, including the right to establish a State on their territory with Jerusalem as its capital. Kuwait furthermore called on the international community, as represented by the Security Council, to bear its responsibilities by putting an end to the practices of the Israeli Government, ensuring the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and taking immediate measures to protect the civilian population and guarantee the non-recurrence of brutal Israeli practices, which had worsened the living conditions of the Palestinian people.

68. His delegation called for an immediate and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan and demanded that the Israeli Government should implement the recommendations of, and cooperate with, the Special Committee. The international community should bring pressure to bear on Israel to end its gross violations of international law in the occupied territories and to make a commitment to the peaceful resolution of the conflict in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), the principle of land for peace, the Arab peace initiative and the road map to Mideast peace.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.